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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 7,450,643 :
Issued: November 11, 2008 :
Application No. 10/754,535 : PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT
Filed: January 12, 2004 :
Dkt. No.: 247444US-2SRD CONT :

This is a decision on the "PETITION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.705(d) AND REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT," filed December 19, 2008.

The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment (PTA) is **DISMISSED**.

The above-identified application matured into U.S. Pat. No. 7,450,643 on November 11, 2008. The patent issued with a PTA 994 days. The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment was timely filed within two months of the issue date of the patent. See, 37 CFR 1.705(d). Patentees request that the adjustment be increased from 994 days to 1,257 days.

Patentees request recalculation of the patent term adjustment based on the decision in Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentees contend that pursuant to Wyeth, a PTO delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) overlaps with a delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) only if the delays occur on the same day. Patentees' calculation of adjustment asserts that the following adjustments do not overlap: a three year delay by the Office, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.703(b), of 263 days and the period of adjustment due to examination delay, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(a), of 1,077 days. The 263-day period is calculated based on the application having been filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) on January 12, 2004, and the patent having been issued on November 11, 2008. Patentees assert that in addition to this 263-day period, they are entitled to a period of adjustment due to examination delay pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(a) of 1,077 days.

Under 37 CFR 1.703(f), patentees are entitled to a period of patent term adjustment equal to the period of delays based on the grounds set forth in 37 CFR 1.702 reduced by the period of time equal to the period of time during which patentees failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude prosecution pursuant to 37 CFR 1.704. In other words, patentees are entitled to the period of Office delay reduced by the period of applicant delay.

Patentees do not dispute that the total period of Office delay is the sum of the period of three years delay and the period of examination delay, to the extent that these periods of delay are not overlapping. However, in effect, patentees contend that only a portion of the three year delay period overlaps with the period of examination delay. Accordingly, patentees submit that the total period of adjustment for Office delay is 1,340 days (deemed by applicants to be the sum of the period of three year delay (669 days) and the period of examination delay (1,077 days), reduced by 406 days of overlap). As such, patentees assert entitlement to a patent term adjustment of 1,257 days (669 days *plus* 1,077 days *less* 406 days of overlap *less* 83 days of applicant delay).

The Office agrees that as of the time that at the time of issuance of the patent, the application was pending three years and 669 days after its filing date. The three years delay commences the day after the date that is three years after the date that an application is filed, and ends the date that the patent issues, notwithstanding any periods of time excluded pursuant to U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii). The Office agrees that certain action was not taken within a specified time frame, and, thus, the entry of a period of adjustment of 1,077 days is correct. At issue is whether patentees should accrue an additional 669 days of patent term adjustment for the Office taking in excess of three years to issue the patent as well as 1,077 days for Office failure to take a certain action within a specified time frame (or examination delay).

The Office contends that the period of 669 days of delay in issuing the patent overlaps with the period of examination delay of 1,077 days. Patentees' calculation of the period of overlap is inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of this provision. 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

Likewise, 35 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in § 1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual

filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 56366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See, also, *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See, also, *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

The current wording of § 1.703(f) was revised in response to the misinterpretation of this provision by a number of Patentees. The rule was slightly revised to more closely track the corresponding language of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). The relevant portion differs only to the extent that the statute refers back to provisions of the statute whereas the rule refers back to sections of the rule. This was not a substantive change to the rule nor did it reflect a change of the Office's interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). As stated in the Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding § 1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed. The grounds specified in these sections cover the A) guarantee of prompt Patent and Trademark Office responses, B) guarantee of no more than 3-year application pendency, and C) guarantee or adjustments for delays due to interference, secrecy orders and appeals. A section by section analysis of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) specifically provides that:

Section 4402 imposes limitations on restoration of term. In general, pursuant to [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(2)(A)-(C), total adjustments granted for restorations under [35 U.S.C. 154](b)(1) are reduced as follows: (1) To the extent that there are multiple grounds for extending the term of a patent that may exist simultaneously (e.g., delay due to a secrecy order under [35 U.S.C.] 181 and administrative delay under [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(1)(A)),

the term should not be extended for each ground of delay but only for the actual number of days that the issuance of a patent was delayed; See, 145 Cong. Rec. S14,718¹.

As such, the period for over three-year pendency does not overlap only to the extent that the actual dates in the period beginning three years after the date on which the application was filed overlap with the actual dates in the periods for failure of the Office to take action within specified time frames. In other words, consideration of the overlap does not begin three years after the filing date of the application.

In this instance, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A) is the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office, January 12, 2004, to the date the patent issued on November 11, 2008. Prior to the issuance of the patent, 1,077 days of patent term adjustment were accorded for the Office failing to respond within a specified time frame during the pendency of the application. All of the 669 days for Office delay in issuing the patent overlap with the 1,077 days of Office delay. During that time, the issuance of the patent was delayed by 1,077 days. The Office did not delay 1,077 days and then delay an additional 669 days. Accordingly, as the 669 days attributable to the delay in the issuance of the patent overlaps with the adjustment of 1,077 days attributable to grounds specified in § 1.702(a), entry of both periods is not warranted.

In view thereof, no adjustment to the patent term will be made.

The Office acknowledges submission of the required application fee of \$200.00. The fee will not be refunded, as requested, as submission of the patent term adjustment application fee is required per 37 CFR 1.18(e).

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3205.



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¹ The AIPA is title IV of the Intellectual Property and Communications Omnibus Reform Act of 1999 (S. 1948), which was incorporated and enacted as law as part of Pub. L. 106-113. The Conference Report for H.R. 3194, 106th Cong. 1st Sess. (1999), which resulted in Pub. L. 106-113, does not contain any discussion (other than the incorporated language) of S. 1948. A section-by-section analysis of S. 1948, however, was printed in the Congressional Record at the request of Senator Lott, See 145 Cong. Rec. S14,708-26 (1999) (daily ed. Nov. 17, 1999).